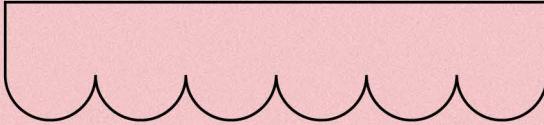


Open House

CARMINE'S ROOM

Open House considers the double act of staging: at once referring to the preparation of a home for reception and the setting of a stage for theatre. The works borrow from domestic postures and materials to reflect how living spaces might be orchestrated under the logics of speculation.

Paula McLean
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How To Work a Room

Text by Ally Rosilio

If you're reading this you have been invited to an Open House, taking place on Friday, July 18th.

We apologize in advance for the lack of furniture. You see, the real estate agent told us that in order to draw people in, we had to create the illusion of home in absence of its objects.

We were promised that the original function of the home would be maintained: one bedroom, one bathroom, one kitchen, two living-rooms. But everything supplementary had to go. And so they staged our home as if we never lived here at all.

They said people would only invest themselves in emptiness—imagine their lives otherwise. So we smoothed out the inconsistencies of our living, swallowed burnt lightbulbs, buried chipped glasses, straddled the floor with our tongues and waited for renewal.

While we waited, we tried our best to make people feel at home. We laid out chairs, placed them inwards so that they might gather, but no one sat in them. We pointed to the detail of moulding, but they were mostly interested in the square footage lost. Tenancy swept under the rug until they ripped that out too.

We hoped that people would try on the home as if it were a worn-in garment, but all they looked for was a pair of slippers, nestled by the door like in some hotel room you might want to live in.

We rehearsed the space over and over again until the walls forgot what they were holding. Until we forgot what we were holding.

And so they poured their dreams into the home like water into an empty cup, tossed coins into the sink.

Maybe in their dream there is wallpaper on the walls. Maybe they'll paint it over. Maybe they'll forget that this used to be a bedroom.

At night, we would leave the curtains open long enough for them to witness us dragging our living back out of the walls. Drawers opened like a television set tuned to the outside looking in.